



Communiqué de Presse

Section des Affaires Publiques
Ambassade des Etats-Unis d'Amérique
2, Avenue Mohamed El Fassi - Rabat
Tel: 0537 66 82 66 - Fax: 0537 66 82 84
Web: <http://rabat.usembassy.gov>

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE Office of the Spokesperson

REMARKS

**Secretary of State John Kerry
Joint Press Availability
with Moroccan Foreign Minister Salaheddine Mezouar**

**April 4, 2014
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Rabat, Morocco**

FOREIGN MINISTER MEZOUAR: (Via interpreter) Ladies and gentlemen – men and women of the media, ladies and gentlemen, so I would like to welcome here on behalf of Mr. John Kerry for this press point.

So you all attended the opening session of the Strategic Dialogue, a dialogue that confirmed the specificity and particularity of the relations which unites the Kingdom of Morocco and the United States of America, relations based on shared and common values of – values of sharing and common evaluation of the stakes of the – today's world as well as the challenges, and the role that we need to play as a country in order to establish peace and stability in the world and in the region, but also to contribute to the evolution of the dissemination of universal values – values of democracy, human rights, respect of liberties, as well as tolerance and stability in the world.

These two value – these values are very fundamental and essential and important for the challenges in the world in which we live today, mainly full of promises, because this is a world that moves and changes where – this is a world where the strength of youth makes the challenges. And the opportunity is very important. Morocco and the United States share these values and are determined to work together and move forward together, which explains this strategic partnership, which is exceptional, that unites the two countries, and which also explains this new dynamic in the relations between our two countries.

Since the royal visit of His Majesty, the King to the United States and the signing of – and the conclusions that were reached after this partnership, I would like to thank you for being with us here. Thank you.

Question number one.

QUESTION: (Via interpreter) (inaudible). What would be the next step of the Strategic Dialogue between Morocco and USA? And at the end of the different rounds of the dialogue, are we going to see – are you going, in fact, to elaborate a common document about the commitments in this framework? Thank you.

FOREIGN MINISTER MEZOUAR: Yes. The Strategic Dialogue has a number of objectives that are political and related to security, and they are also economic and cultural. Concerning the economic issues and questions, we are a country where there is an agreement, and we're the only country to have this agreement of free trade with the United States to open a dynamic and perspectives – prospects. It allows the two countries to identify through the economic actors the opportunities – strategic opportunities which offer themselves to them. We also have the agreements in the framework of MCC, which was a success, according to everybody, sent – is a new package that is being prepared. And what's important for us also is what was confirmed during the visit of His Majesty to the United States.

We also have Africa and the challenges, the common challenges in relation to stability in Africa and in relation to the economic development, human development, and also to the – to reinforce the cultural identity of African societies. The commitments of President Obama concerning Africa and also the first summit U.S.-Africa in August – so these are strong signs towards this continent, and they're very promising, as I said, which is not a problem, but a solution.

And that leaves to be seen in a different way and needs a different attitude. It's not a continent that needs assistance and help; it's a continent that needs commitment. That's what the Majesty said in his last trip. More than 100 agreements were signed – economic agreements, human development, as well as other aspects with the cultural dimension. So it's a partnership that is open and that is ambitious that also talks about the commitments. And I think this is what allows us to say today that this Strategic Dialogue and this new partnership that unites the two countries is exceptional.

MS. PSAKI: Michael Gordon, *The New York Times*.

QUESTION: A question for Secretary Kerry, and then the foreign minister. Mr. Secretary, you've taken about a dozen trips to the Middle East and have invested enormous time and energy into attempts to breathe some life into the Middle East peace process. But after nine months, the two sides can't even agree whether to continue talking.

President Abbas, it seems, did not do you the courtesy of notifying you in advance that he was giving his Tuesday night speech in which he announced the Palestinians would sign the 15 international conventions and treaties, and the Israelis did not appear to have notified you in

advance of their decision to formally cancel the release of the fourth batch of prisoners. Meanwhile, the U.S. has a challenging array of foreign policy problems.

You've often said it's up to the leaders on the Palestinian and Israeli sides to make peace. Are they wasting your time? Are they wasting President Obama's time? When is it time to say enough is enough and adjust the Administration's foreign policy priorities? And what will be the Obama Administration's criteria for making that decision?

And for the foreign minister, a respected Moroccan journalist is being tried under the antiterrorist law. How does this square with Morocco's promise to improve press freedom and human rights? Thank you.

SECRETARY KERRY: Michael, regrettably in the last few days, both sides have taken steps that are not helpful, and that's evident to everybody. So we are going to evaluate very carefully exactly where this is and where it might possibly be able to go. I will – as you know, I'm going back to Washington today or going back to the region today. I will be having conversations with the Administration today, including the President, and we are going to evaluate exactly what is possible and what is not possible.

I said yesterday the leaders have to make these decisions. Clearly, President Obama, the United States of America, and as Secretary of State, we have an enormous amount on the plate and we're currently engaged in discussions with the Russians with respect to Ukraine, challenges in Iran, Syria, and other parts of the world. So your question is entirely appropriate. There are limits to the amount of time and effort that the United States can spend if the parties themselves are unwilling to take constructive steps in order to be able to move forward.

So we intend to evaluate. They say they want to continue. Both parties say they want to continue. Neither party has said that they've called it off. But we're not going to sit there indefinitely. This is not an open-ended effort, never has been, and the President said that from the beginning and I've said that many times, including in the last few days. So it's reality check time, and we intend to evaluate precisely what the next steps will be.

Now, I will say that none of this time has been wasted because much has been narrowed and discussed in the course of the last months, and everywhere I go – everywhere I go, I am asked by – about the Middle East peace process. Salaheddine asked me this morning and last night; much preoccupation. The Arab League will be meeting on this in a few days as a result. In addition, when I met with my five bilaterals at NATO, every foreign minister that walked in there to talk about Ukraine talked about the Middle East.

So this is a global concern, but President Obama has made it clear and I've made it clear this is not open-ended. We have a huge agenda. And we're going to evaluate precisely what is possible and what is not possible.

FOREIGN MINISTER MEZOUAR: (Via interpreter) In relation to the question that was addressed to me, I would like first to reassure you that in the domain of the freedom of speech, as well as in other domains, Morocco has achieved a lot, and it does this because it is convinced and

because of its commitments as well as a dynamic of political and constitutional and institutional reasons which go in the same direction of the values that we chose – those of democracy, freedom, and human rights.

The case that you have mentioned is a case where today, the case is in the hands of justice, and because we have respect – both political and the Administration, as well as the journalists – we need to respect this. There's a law in Morocco that is very clear to do – the apology of terrorism is considered as an act, as a provocation at the level of society. And this is what constituted the basis of this case.

During all the phases of the case, Mr. Anouzla benefited from all guarantees, and on the request of his lawyer, he was liberated. Morocco does not try to incriminate the right, the freedom of expression and the freedom to write. But like in all countries of the world, there are rules that – for society. So we are in a region where the issues related to terrorism are very sensitive and the obligations of us all is to do our best, that in relation to the matters of terrorism and the – our determination.

So we have a lot of respect for Mr. Anouzla, who is a great journalist, and naturally, we would wish that these kind of questions should be overcome, and there has to be consensus within the society and the level of all the social actors in relation to matters of terrorism. The United States act with – in relation to these issues because they are fundamental and because we know that matters related to terrorism see destabilization, and we do our best through the wisdom and also dialogue, but also law so that these questions be dealt with in the most democratic way, and the most civilized way, because this is about society and this is about the future of our people.